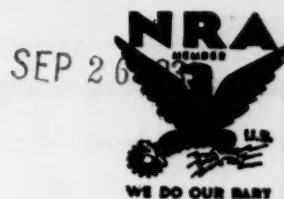


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# THE COMMONWEAL

*A Weekly Review of Literature, The Arts  
and Public Affairs*

Friday, September 29, 1933

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## RUSSIAN VIGNETTES

Clara Merrill

## CATHOLIC LIBRARY BOOKS

James J. Walsh

## THE SHADOW OF WAR

*An Editorial*

*Other articles and reviews by Mary H. Dwyer, Dino Ferrari,  
Vincent C. Donovan, Richard Dana Skinner,  
Boyd-Carpenter and Raymond Larsson*

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Volume XVIII

Friday, September 29, 1933

Number 22

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## THE SHADOW OF WAR

THE SHADOW of the darkest of all the dangers which menace mankind falls again upon the world—the probability of war. Perhaps it would be nearer the truth to say that the shadow is again being realized, for it has not lifted, still less has it disappeared, for many years. But in the insistent pressure of other problems and perils, we have tended to forget or even deliberately to ignore the grim omens of the greatest of all human disasters. After all, the capacity for giving attention simultaneously to a large number of subjects is a rare gift. Moreover—to repeat what we have had other occasions to point out—the high degree of efficiency which we have achieved in communications tends to defeat the purpose of such a system, which is to inform the public, so that the power of its enlightened opinion may be mobilized. With newspapers, and radios, and motion picture reports constantly flooding us with news and views from all parts of the world, while at the same time our national economic crisis absorbs the greater part of our liveliest interest, a sort of paralysis of attention is produced.

Moreover, such a situation causes another

source of confusion, in that it leads to a great danger of the exaggeration of special points of view—of propaganda in the invidious sense of that much abused term. Several of the most important factors in the puzzle-picture of war or peace—such as Russia, Germany, Turkey, Japan—are countries where the censorship exercises such rigid control that the free play of inter-communications cannot exist. Then, again, the fanaticism of absolute pacifism, which either dominates or largely affects the operations of so many national and international peace movements, clashes with the avowed and powerful influence of militarism, of the propaganda of force as a manly and human virtue. Nevertheless, in spite of all these difficulties, no greater duty rests upon us today than to meet the menace of war, and to consolidate all the moral strength of humanity to avert that menace.

The coming renewal of the Geneva Disarmament Conference calls public attention to this problem of problems. The preliminary discussions in Paris between representatives of Great Britain, France and the United States, indicate—as we go



to press—that the accord as to policy between France and Great Britain, which had been foreshadowed as a result of the Nazi triumph in Germany, has not been reached. It is as clear as any fact can be that Hitlerism threatens the peace of Europe. But can that threat of force be overcome by answering threats of force? There is agreement in diagnosis, now that the experts gather, as surgeons or physicians gather about a bedside; but as to treatment, as to the real remedy, there is still the confusion of divided counsels, there is still the conflict of opposing national interests. In this dark hour we see, as never before, the loss of unity in moral principles which Europe suffered in the aftermath of the Reformation. Since Christendom dissolved in secular nationalisms, no other bond of common thought, of a common philosophy, of the unity even of the higher interests of a common humanity (not to speak of the unity of a common religion) has been forged to take its place.

We do not propose to enter into a discussion at present of the intricate problem which the Disarmament Conference must struggle with. The technical aspects do not at present concern us. We write to arouse if we can at least a few more readers, particularly our Catholic readers, to a sense of the actual danger of war, with a hope that they will at least do two things. The first is to join and support in all possible ways the Catholic Association for International Peace. The second is to give all the coöperation it is possible for Catholics to give, without violating their own loyalty to Catholic doctrine, to the efforts being made by men and women of other forms of faith to attain international peace. Short of absolute pacifism, which is contrary to Catholic doctrine, there is no measure urged by the various peace associations which does not deserve at least the most sympathetic consideration of Catholics. Most of them, indeed, it seems to us, call for active support. In addition to the Catholic Association for International Peace, which is fostered by the central agency of the American Catholic bishops, the National Catholic Welfare Conference, and which has its office at the headquarters of that agency, at 1312 Massachusetts Avenue, Washington, D. C., both the National Council of Catholic Men and the National Council of Catholic Women have joined the movement to achieve world peace. While the first-named organization is more specifically suited for a minority of leaders, the other, larger bodies give strength and support to the work of those leaders.

We urge the immediate rallying of our priests and our laity alike to join one or another of these organizations. In spite of our preoccupation with what may seem to be more necessary, more immediate problems—our economic recovery, for example—we will be recreant to the highest inter-

ests of our Church, our nation, and international civilization, if we fail, we individual Catholics, to take our part in the coöperative crusade against war. In vain will be our attempts to reconstruct our economic system, if that system be permitted to lie exposed to the imminent perils of another great war. And today that peril is at our doors. It must be met by the united energies of the moral forces of civilization. As the Joint Committee on Peace of the National Catholic Welfare Conference states in its report: "The promotion of peace is an act of love of God and man, and none the less so because it is necessary for self-preservation."

## WEEK BY WEEK

**T**HE FINAL relinquishment by the Socialists under Azaña in Spain of the government to Premier Lerroux was a delayed act of simple justice. The Socialists clearly understood that they represented only a small minority and that the sentiment of the country was for a sober, constructive republicanism, for

a representative, parliamentary rule, rather than for revolutionary violence and rule by arbitrary decree of the man in the saddle with his gangster gunmen and incendiaryists to enforce by terror his tyrannies. The refusal of the majority of the Spanish people to meet violence with violence and at the cost of bloody strife to secure for themselves certain elemental rights to the possession of their own souls in peace, permitted the Socialist minority to hang on. Their tyranny became more and more isolated, however, and it is a credit to some remaining modicum of good sense that they were able to appreciate that a government out of sympathy with the people, though it may pay lip service to considering only the people's best interests, cannot effectively serve these interests. While it is not expected that Lerroux will be able immediately to undo the rape of the religious orders and the Church in Spain and the secularization of the schools, he undoubtedly will be a moderating influence. The intolerant Socialists planned not only to despoil the Christian people of the shrines which centuries of devotion have built up but also to deny them any right, after being robbed, of holding property again. This was the ultimate glorification of the highwayman. The present government while incapable of effecting complete justice and restoring the stolen property to its owners, will at least, we hope, be able to modify the prohibition on future ownership. This trend to a facing of sober reasonableness and fair play in Spain, it is also to be hoped, will set a salutary example for some of the remaining violent tyrannies making a mock of social justice and the rights of their citizens.



**SURELY** few men in history have experienced the fate of Lord Edward Grey—years of seclusion, then death followed by an apotheosis of commemorative articles many of which possess real value as historical documents. After having read through a small part of this literature, one is impressed again by the extraordinary representative significance of the enigmatic statesman. During the summer of 1914 all threads ran through his fingers. He was a liberal, a friend of peace, above all one who realized what a fearful price Britain would have to pay for a military victory in the threatened war. Yet he acted as if conflict were merely a diplomatic instrument. Lloyd George and other Englishmen troubled by the present debacle of Western society believe that if Lord Grey had let it be known definitely that an outbreak of hostilities would find Britain on the side of France, the pressure upon Berlin would have been sufficient to maintain the peace. However all this may be—the whole history of those weeks remains, all documents notwithstanding, a great mystery—the interesting fact is that Lord Grey who wanted to prevent war and might have been able to do so failed to try the sole practicable means at his disposal. He was, as it were, the last girder which held an old building erect. In succumbing he gave evidence that at decisive moments history is not controlled by the will of individuals but by seemingly inexorable forces the push of which it is impossible to resist. We who are still suffering from that push cannot consider it too carefully. For it is only the moral strength of a great portion of mankind which can ever suffice to ward off the pressure generated in good part by the evil tendencies in the human soul.

**IT IS** a pleasure to read that the Pope spoke earnest words on the ethics of advertising, to delegates of the International Advertising Congress, meeting in Rome. The fact has no specific practical significance. The advertising men were not singled out from the rest of mankind. The Holy Father, as the head of Christendom, meets all comers of good-will, and as the teacher of universal truth, proclaims without distinction the moral laws governing every branch of legitimate endeavor. But for all of that, the event has a certain happy symbolism and timeliness. Much has been made of the present Pontiff's adoption of modern technique. The world has been honestly astonished and pleased at the Vatican automobiles, the Vatican City express train, the radio station, the Pope's own willingness to broadcast, and to pose for motion pictures. It has been even more astonished and pleased at what it calls his "modern" ideas of economic and social

justice. That these ideas go back in their genesis to the beginning of revelation, and that their truth is eternal, does not obviate a certain justice in the notion. They are modern in meeting modern actuality on its own ground. And surely the Pope's audience to the advertising men extends the association. The most characteristic achievement of our times is the use of publicity, including the commercial publicity of advertising. It has often been misused, often done grave mischief; but in itself it is a valid thing, with great and exciting possibilities for civilizing habits and guiding opinion. The number of its practitioners who believe that it can and should be rigidly principled and truthful, even though it takes a loss (it has always had them), is definitely increasing. A serious address from the Pope to these men in this spirit is a unique recognition of their standing and a sort of baptism of their effort.

**OUT OF** the Harvard School of Business which has been munificently provided for by the master minds of the lamented "Prosperity" we have been expecting to have some apologia for their lives. It is true that the academic mind when it gets a comfortable endowed seat is prone to bite the hand that feeds it; thus the ideal of academic freedom is preserved with but rare exceptions. This is not to imply that what we are about to cite is a dictated thing. We wished only to point out that rather remarkable phenomenon that our capitalistic institutions of higher learning seem so rarely to show a disposition favorable to the higher capitalists. The present exception is a small booklet entitled "The Behavior of Consumption in Business Depression," by Arthur R. Tebbutt, instructor in business statistics at the Harvard school. It is described by the financial editor of *Time* as "a punch at the theories behind the Industrial Recovery Act." Briefly, it presents statistical evidence that depression consumption of meat, butter, tobacco, grain, textiles and clothes fell very little if at all, while the consumption of steel and other metals and of lumber fell to less than half the pre-depression level. The punch from this follows: "In the aggregate, consumption of goods by the ultimate consumer has remained at a very high level even during the depression. . . . Judging the character of stagnation in business solely on the basis of consumption, we find that the depression is marked by sharply reduced consumption of producers' goods. That the way out of the depression is to increase consumption of producers' goods seems evident. . . . At the present time, however, if such a balanced recovery does occur, it does not seem likely that it can be attributed in any large part to the current activities of the administration."

Inertia

Economy

The Pope  
and the  
Ad Men

THIS is no mere feint. We believe it represents sincere, informed opposition to our present national trend. It says in fact: "Let us prevail on the big men who have the big money to put more money into the improvement of the factories and mines and farm machines. Human beings will get the necessities of life somehow or other, even if reduced to pauperism and dependence on charity. The price of consumer goods may fall below the profit level for the producers, but let the latter improve their production facilities anyway." Thus the heroic measures of the administration to raise prices and reemploy men and women, to improve the purchasing power of the farmers, and, through a huge public works program, to improve the buying of "steel and other metals and lumber" by improving public facilities without leading to worse conditions in an undenied surfeit of consumers' goods with its vicious circle of unemployment, falling prices, plants closing and lack of demand for producers' goods, and the administration's refusal in behalf of the American people to accept lying down the very situation that the professor describes as a *fait accompli*, are opposed for not seeming like a large contribution to a balanced recovery. The very weakness of this opposition, however, presents we believe a splendid perspective on the magnitude of the administration's and the nation's common effort.

WE SHOULD not go so far as to say that the crisis of criminality has passed for our country, but it is plainly evident that the patient has a better constitution than some of his doctors supposed, and that, once awakened to the danger of his illness, he is putting up a robust fight. To change the figure, there is a new and healthy determination visible throughout the country in the matter of law enforcement and the punishment of crime. This has not been brought about by more drastic legal penalties; such an improvement seldom is. It may be due in part to the imminence of repeal, with the promise of a rational and controllable liquor situation. But it seems due also to the simple fact that people are fed up with crime, and have suddenly realized that they themselves can check it. Public apathy is giving way to a new expectation that kidnappers will be caught—and they are being caught; that racketeers will be brought to trial for racketeering—and that also is happening occasionally. The change is not complete, by any means, but that there is a change is undeniable.

IN LINE with its most salutary developments are the activities of the sister states of New Jersey and New York for keeping politics and gangs out of the alcohol business. A reported slush fund among Jersey brewers for the purpose of influenc-

ing legislation is even now the subject of legislative inquiry, backed by popular desire and conducted by a public-spirited counsel, Frederick Burnett, who it is said will not accept compensation. At the same time, our own state's Alcoholic Beverage Control Board is dealing with potential racketeers with a scientific exhaustiveness that fulfills all one knows of the methods of its chairman, Mr. Mulrooney. In normal times, one would regret, one would probably oppose, the photographing, fingerprinting and questionnaire-filing by which the board proposes (under penalty of license revocation) to keep tab on all the male employees of brewers and liquor wholesalers. But these are not normal times. They are times when one of the most fabulously profitable businesses is just being legally refounded, and when ruffians and ex-convicts are organized to "muscle in" on it. There is said to be racketeer beer in quantity already in New York City, and attempts at terrorism are beginning. The board is justified in its methods, and admirable in its decisiveness.

ELEVEN HUNDRED amateur artists competed in the recent contest for scholarship awards by the Art Students' League of New York, and among the outstanding winners was a structural iron worker who was one of the workers on the seventy-two story

RCA Building and who is now at work on the new Federal Court House's steel frame. He lives in Brooklyn with his wife and child and he likes to paint pictures of small farmsteads. These, he says, are partly reminiscent of the scenes of his childhood in Norway and partly dreams of a place he would like for himself and wife and child. The situation is interesting to us as a little commentary on human nature. Here is one of the titans who actually builds the outstanding monuments of our times. The sky-scraping spires of our modern cathedrals of commerce, of course, have their designers who put them all down on paper first and their capitalists who pay for them and who are the high-priests in their sanctuaries. But here is a man who is one of the builders, who with his pards puts things together, starting in the bowels of the earth where the iron pillars are anchored, working up to the earth's crust, then raising a building, piece by piece, to the clouds. And he is thinking of a small, one story cottage, as simple, solid, natural as a boulder, in the midst of fields where sunshine, starlight and rains stream in succession, without benefit of a mosaic heaven in some stark modernistic design, air-conditioning and gilt. "Each age is a dream that is dying or one that is coming to birth," said O'Shaughnessy; still through successive ages the dream of a cottage persists, as well as dreams of towers of Babel that will surprise heaven and be an escape from earth's rugged simplicities.

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## THE LONG CLIMB

IT NOW seems clearly evident that not only has there been a real upward turn in our national economic situation, but that it coincides with an improvement in Europe. It may be that at last the world has touched the bottom of the depression and has begun its climb toward better conditions. Such a view is tenable, we think, even if we grant the truth of the widely held belief that a social revolution is in progress. For that revolution, at least in the chief industrial nations, the United States, Great Britain and the nations of the British Commonwealth, France, Belgium and Holland, is apparently proceeding by a sort of rapid transformation of social institutions, within the normal framework of laws and customs, rather than through violent political or military action. It seems quite obvious that society cannot return to the unhampered policy of the old system. Even to attempt such a course would be to provoke disasters worse than any we have so far met. What is to issue from the present situation nobody can safely predict; but that out of the conflict of ideas, and the many experiments, we shall tend toward a greater measure of coöperative social action, with government, industry and labor as partners rather than as rivals or enemies, seems to be strongly indicated. If that tendency should be deflected, or defeated, some system like industrial Fascism will probably arise.

If these reflections—or let us frankly say, these guesses—are justified, there are stronger reasons for Catholic support of the President's program than merely conventional patriotism, the feeling that the policy of a national executive should be trusted and supported even when the economic reasons for doing so are not understood. For the President's policy of social coöperation rests upon ethical principles which bring it into harmony with the teaching of the Church. Its success will be a triumph of spiritual power as well as a betterment of material circumstances. It is natural, therefore, that the utterances of Catholic leaders supporting the President's program should be emphatic and numerous. Cardinal Hayes, of New York, has issued a statement of high significance. It runs, in part, as follows:

"Through the National Recovery Act our President is mobilizing and coördinating the economic processes of the nation to banish the want of recent years, to insure wider employment to our citizens under decent working conditions, to bring back the contented, orderly family life that bespeaks good morale for a country. His efforts in this regard have already reawakened the hopes and ambitions of our people. All feel that a brighter day is dawning. Because the welfare of the entire country is involved, the National Recovery Act merits the unqualified and whole-

hearted support of every American. Justice, even-handed, fair and honest, not for one group or class, is its aim. For its success we pray God's blessing that our fellow citizens may enjoy their divinely-given natural rights which too often have been denied them by relentless and unbridled competition. The task to which the government has set its hand is complicated beyond conception. However, I am confident that with patience, tolerance and devotion to the common good, we shall see the full return of the brighter day."

That such a message will be of very great practical value to the recovery movement, cannot be doubted. It will inspire a multitude of Catholics now doing their part to greater efforts, and it will encourage and enhearten non-Catholics as well. The Church's leaders and teachers have often had occasion to criticize unfavorably or even to condemn many social systems, or governmental policies; but now its leaders in the United States find themselves justified in commending and aiding the government's social policy, because they see that this policy is motivated by a sense of justice. Not the desire for power, or wealth at any cost, or the interests of a special class, but justice for all. It may be that specific items of the proposed policy will fail—some of them are frankly put forward as experiments—but we believe that the people overwhelmingly approve that policy simply because they recognize the desire for justice, which animates President Roosevelt, and his determination to achieve it as far as is humanly possible.

An increase of positive Catholic Action directed toward social justice will naturally result from such statements as that made by Cardinal Hayes, and many other Catholic leaders. Such an increase will be greatly aided by an extension of popular support for the Catholic League for Social Justice. Up to this time the members of the League, which has received episcopal sanction in fifty-four dioceses of the United States, six in Canada and eighteen in Mexico, have lacked a unifying organ for their activities. This has now been gained by the establishment of the *Social Justice Bulletin*, edited and published monthly by Michael O'Shaughnessy, New Canaan, Connecticut, at one dollar a year. Pledged to personal action, first of all, prayer and the reception of the sacraments, and study of the Catholic doctrine on social justice, the members also pledge themselves to do all in their power, in their homes and in business life alike, to conform to Christian principles, and to promote them. The value of their individual efforts can be great, but the further value that would come from the organization of study clubs, following, as the League itself recommends, the lines laid down for such clubs by the Social Action Department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, would be tremendous—in the long climb out of the morass of depression.



# THE ROCK OF SOLESMES

By VINCENT C. DONOVAN

THE APPROACH to Solesmes from the nearby town of Sablé is along the bank of the Sarthe through a fertile and rugged country. There are marble quarries on both sides of the river. From whatever angle one views the Benedictine monastery, it seems to spring up like florescent marble. Its strength gives it the semblance of a fortress. (And is not every monastery a citadel of virtue and of knowledge?) This impression is confirmed by a visit to the cellar where mounds of unhewn rock undulate between the foundation piers. It is, therefore, of special significance to see, on entering the abbatial church, the statue of the abbey's patron, Saint Peter. The shattered philosophies which lie scattered about Peter, called the Rock by Christ Himself, the half-truths and successive modernities or limited views of life whose skeletons lie exposed there, testify to how truly Peter is the symbol and instrument of Him Who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. The last hundred years in the history of Solesmes offer similar proof that liturgically, as well as actually, it is founded on a rock.

The Abbey of St. Peter came into existence in the period of Cluny. The act of adoration by Geoffrey le Vieux, Lord of Sablé, is dated 1010. Its history since then has surged with a rhythm of glory and exile and renewed glory. Until the fifteenth century, it had the normal, placid life of the Benedictines. Pillaged in 1425 by the English, it was restored in the last quarter of the same century. In the late fifteenth and middle sixteenth centuries were sculptured the famous "Saints of Solesmes," which work has been called "the heart of the national art" of the period. The Huguenots made repeated attacks between 1556 and 1664, and the general religious disruption also contributed to the eclipse of monastic glory. In 1664, though, there was another élan in the rhythm of its history through the installation of the reform of St. Maur. The Maurist ideal of prayer and science begot notable scientific research and editions of the Fathers of the Church. They began the reconstruction of the abbey itself in 1722. In 1753 began the agitations which ended in the repression of the religious life in 1790. The abbey was auctioned in 1791. Only the fact that it thus became private property saved the "Saints" from destruction. The attempts in 1803 and 1807 to move them to Le Mans were definitely settled only by a decree of Napoleon himself in 1812. Though for forty-three years the Divine praises were not sung in the church, and though from 1880 to 1896 the monks were banished from the monastery, and from 1901 to 1922

were in exile on the Isle of Wight, the date of Napoleon's decree (July 11, feast of the Translation of the Relics of Saint Benedict) proved to be a happy augury. Not only was the integrity of the church restored, but in the abbey itself the Rule of Saint Benedict came again to its own.

That took place July 11, 1833, through Prosper Louis Pascal Guéranger. Born in Sablé, April 4, 1805, his earliest walks were to the dead abbey. He was curious about the "Saints," whose history, with its implications, intrigued him. The solitude fascinated him. So deeply sown was this twofold seed of love of solitude, and interest in the history of antiquity, that even in his student days at Angers he was nicknamed "the monk." As a seminarian at Le Mans, his studies became broadened and intensified along the line which most attracted him—the tradition of the Roman Church. As a subdeacon, he was made secretary to the bishop, and was a canon as soon as he was ordained a priest. At the chapel of the Religious of the Sacred Heart, he used the Roman Missal, which in France was rare, because there were at least twenty different Missals and Breviaries in use in France, and in one diocese as many as five, all compiled in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and tinged with Jansenism and Gallicanism. Young Guéranger instinctively responded to the accents of doctrinal truth and rhetorical beauty of the traditional Missal, and obtained his bishop's permission to use that and the Roman Breviary. This inspired his writing which began then. At this time, too, and also at the Sacred Heart Convent, he came into contact with the Cosnard family, who in 1832 supplied him with funds to save the Abbey of St. Peter from actual destruction. He took possession of it December 14, 1832. With two other clerics and four postulant lay brothers, on July 11, 1833, he restored monastic life to the Abbey of St. Peter, and with it the religious life and the Roman liturgy to France; thereby sowing the seed of the modern Liturgical Movement.

About the time of his ordination, he had begged God to raise up men of zeal who would restore to glory and liberty the centers of prayer in society. The events of the last hundred years have proved him and his work to have been these providential means. De Maistre said that "there is nothing so difficult as to be the only one." Dom Guéranger also proved this, because not only was the philosophy of the world against his principle and project, but even zealous and intelligent men of religion claimed the desperate conditions of the time required an active life. Why not a school? The direct or indirect assumption, and even asser-

tion, was that monasticism menaced society. Lamennais, for instance, who was at first interested in Guéranger's project, thought monastic life could do without the liturgical offices. His later defection, and the hundred year testimony to Dom Guéranger's wisdom, have proved that the latter was right in deeming life to proceed from prayer, action from doctrine, and doctrine itself from prayer. "As if one could have a work comparable," he said, "to liturgical prayer, in dignity, importance, and result." His ideal was to help souls search for God, to contemplate supernatural truths, and to stimulate a taste for them. He felt inspired to attempt this work, and seeking always to be the supple instrument of God's will, no merely human opposition could discourage him. Success didn't matter in God's eyes, he said, only our intention—our will united to His. Liturgical prayer develops this moral courage because, according to the teachings of Peter, in that prayer we attain to the thought and the life of Christ Himself. This is why Dom Guéranger said that after the Sacrifice of the Mass and the administration of the sacraments, the liturgy is action, "the most useful and holiest one can accomplish on earth."

Prayer implies action because it is the life of Divine love, and love is action. Christ said this principle of charity is the whole of life—the love of God overflows into love of neighbor. Dom Guéranger's ideal, therefore, implied a flowing out of mystic power from the liturgical life and example of his monks. His purpose was the restoration to integral Catholic life. This necessitated being rebound to the Rock upon which it is founded. We must be reminded that we are primarily members of the human race, not bound by nationalities which tend to discord, but united in the harmony of the children of God through Christ. Hence the necessity of the universal social prayer of the Church, because, as he said, "unity of prayer entails unity of thought." Truth must be assimilated through every channel. Beauty must be made the handmaid of Truth. All the external rites, with all the arts they entail, must be restored to the solid foundation of traditional knowledge. For, he said, "the liturgy can heal and save the world, but only on condition that it be understood." This prompted his "Liturgical Year" which has been called "the fundamental manual of Catholic piety." He realized that the external rites of the liturgical year are no more worship than prayer only from the lips is union with God. Liturgical prayer, moreover, is not a human, social function putting us in contact with men, but the means which a Divine society uses to effect a union with God. It is the synthesis of life.

Because of Dom Guéranger's interest in prayer and study, the study preparing for the prayer, it

is not to be wondered at that he was indifferent to nothing of interest to the Church. By nature, study, and the accidents of life, he was mixed up in all the important affairs of the epoch. He was the Church's champion against Gallicanism, Jansenism, naturalism and liberalism. Through his friends he touched all the burning issues of the day. Lacordaire, Montalambert, Madame Swetchine and Louis Veuillot either for a time or enduringly were his friends. Lamennais also was, in a way, his friend. Yet in all of his relations with leaders, he never gained anything at the sacrifice of principle. He once said that the pillaging of churches was bad, but the pillaging of principles much worse. His activities and his principles were Catholic. He clung to and eloquently defended Peter. A biographer has said that Dom Guéranger's life and thought were condensed in three words—Church, Pope, tradition. In an age which loudly declaimed the rights of man, this courageous work from his choir stall even more insistently proclaimed the rights of God which imply duties on the part of man. These duties to God and man he learns in prayer. It is the source of culture, as the history of the monastic order proves. Dom Guéranger restored Solesmes that he might give back to us our heritage.

The synthetic and cultural power of prayer Pope Celestine stated when he said, "The law of prayer establishes the law of belief." As the present Abbot of Solesmes has pointed out in his commemorative brochure, "L'Oeuvre de Dom Guéranger," the thought or belief of the centuries has fluctuated with the liturgy, and that has followed the graph of the chart. Prayer synthesizes life by focusing all our powers on the one thing necessary; music synthesizes liturgical prayer by uniting in its sung praises the purposes of all the other liturgical elements. They all lead to thought; thought progresses to God; and God moves us to fruitful activity through love. One is conscious of this synthesis through the chant at Solesmes.

It is perhaps the crowning glory of the ideal which animated Dom Guéranger. He was determined on an integral return to antiquity. Only a thorough scientific research could reconstruct for the Church the glories of the days following Gregory the Great. Canon Gontier of Le Mans prepared the ground for the restoration of Gregorian chant in his "Reasoned Method of Plain Chant." So in accord were he and his friend, Dom Guéranger, on principles, that it was through Canon Gontier's "Mémoire" at the Musical Congress of Paris in 1860 that Solesmes became the symbol of something solid to be reckoned with in liturgical music. Dom Guéranger set himself and his monks to the solution of a twofold problem—the restoration of the authentic primitive melodic text, and the rhythmic interpretation of the



Church's official music. Under his direction, Dom Jansions began the study and collation of manuscripts. Dom Pothier carried this further after the death of Dom Jansions, and in "Les Melodies Gregoriennes" amplified the principles of Canon Gontier's work. But it was the saintly Dom Mocquereau who fully realized the ideal in that monument of historical research, "Le Paléographie Musical," and his unique work on rhythm, "Le Nombre Musical." The application of its principles by the monastic choir of Solesmes under Dom Mocquereau established the fame which increases with the more widespread comprehension of the scholarly work achieved. Dom Gajard, who Dom Mocquereau in 1919 told me was his other self in this work, has continued in the tradition. The impersonal, thoroughly scientific research still continues after fifty years or more for all who will to study. To hear the monks sing is to acclaim their scientific work, which has been truly a word of prayer. The artistry and intelligence of their interpretation of the chant reminds us forcibly that genuine Beauty must be founded on Truth, since Beauty is only the clarification of Truth.

Truth, Christ said, is like a mustard seed. The great tree of the modern Liturgical Movement, sprung from Dom Guéranger's ideal, proves it. His first impulse was only the personal sanctification of his works through the Church's musical prayer. But Truth and Beauty have a way of breaking down barriers; they refuse to be limited in scope. So, although Dom Guéranger had not hoped for a liturgical revolution in France, suffering as it was from the poisoned gas of Gallicanism, in his own lifetime he saw the Roman liturgy restored to his country, and by means of the liturgy the Church in France had gone over the mountain of extreme nationalism to rebind itself to the Rock of Peter. Not only that, but the one center of liturgical prayer at Solesmes has been the seed whence the tree of Benedictine life has spread its branches throughout Europe, and sprouted even in the Americas. In the Congregation of France, there are eleven abbeys, six priories and three convents of nuns with abbesses, totaling about one thousand monks and nuns. The monasteries are not only in France, but in England, Luxembourg, Spain, Italy, Holland, Canada and South America. Under the influence of Dom Guéranger, also, the order was reestablished in Germany. The first Abbots of Beuron, Dom Maur Wolter and Dom Placide Wolter, spent several months at Solesmes in 1863. They said that "nothing will ever diminish the gratitude and affection which unite us to the monks of Solesmes, especially to the Abbot." From Beuron have sprung Maria Laach and other liturgical centers in Germany, Maredsous in Belgium, and monasteries in Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland. We might say that Dom Guéranger,

in restoring the Abbey of St. Peter of Solesmes, restored liturgical prayer to the world.

He once said that the Dominican Order merited a high place in the history of the liturgy. It was at his urging that Lacordaire studied the Dominican Constitution, and then, after a retreat at Solesmes in the very building where this article has been prepared, decided on the restoration of the Order of Preachers in France. The friendly relations between Solesmes and the Dominicans from that day to this is epitomized in the fact that in this centennial year the Dominican Master-General has sent to Solesmes one of his subjects in preparation for the revision of the Dominican liturgical books, and the establishment in Rome of a Dominican Liturgical Institute. This same Dominican was the means of contact between Dom Mocquereau and Mrs. Justine Ward, who, through the Pius X School of Liturgical Music in New York, where she invited the master for a chant course in 1922, and who now in Europe with her revised method, has done so much to further the mission of Solesmes. As a brother Dominican of Lacordaire, I am happy to place this testimonial of gratitude and affection on the tomb of Dom Guéranger by way of felicitating the monks of Solesmes on the hundredth anniversary of their restoration.

And what a glorious commemoration! The centennial ceremonies took place from July 9 to 11. They consisted of solemn Mass and Vespers each day. Abbot Cozier of St. Peter's, Superior-General of the Congregation of France, pontificated the first day at both Mass and Vespers, and also at Vespers the second day. Abbot Cabrol pontificated at the Requiem Mass the second day. After this Mass for deceased monks of the congregation, the monks filed into the chapel of the crypt where the beautiful new tomb of Dom Guéranger was dedicated. Fittingly, his favorite Psalm (Psalm 102), which he recited on his deathbed, was chanted, and also the verse from Psalm 118 which constitutes the form of profession of the monks. The last day, the Ordinary, Monsignor Grente of Le Mans, presided at the Mass, at which Abbot Savaton pontificated. The occasion was honored by members of the French hierarchy, thirteen abbots, many clergy, six representatives from Parliament, and several of the nobility. At Vespers, Dom Bouvet, Prior of Quarr Abbey, officiated, and Bishop Grente pontificated at Benediction, after a discourse by Monsignor Duparc, Bishop of Quimper and Léon. This concluded the commemorative exercises of thanksgiving.

All of them were the glorious fulfilment of Dom Guéranger's ideal. The beauty of the liturgy, perfect in all its phases, reminded at least one present of Pius X's observation that a liturgical service lost nothing of impressiveness by conform-



ing to liturgical law. Simplicity here amounted to grandeur. This was particularly true of the chant, which merits a special article. Here was virile spirituality—so spiritual as to be almost as invisible as breath, but just as life-giving. It thrills the soul as only the intimate things of the spirit can. It is not a performance, but contemplation. We are transported to a sphere above ourselves.

We can so transcend self only when holding fast to Truth. Saint Teresa said, "Humility is truth." This is so because humility is the adjustment to reality. Dom Guéranger believed such adjustment possible for individual and society only through attachment to the Chair of Peter. Liturgical prayer achieves this through the *sensus Christi*. Such is the aim of the Liturgical Movement. Its increasing momentum is encouraging. But for its complete success we need to follow the example of Dom Guéranger and the monks of Solesmes. He had been impressed by the words of Psalm 116: "I believe, and because of that I speak." He said: "It is for God to do what He will with

my word." The history of Solesmes in its restoration of the chant has been the application of that principle. They have humbly sought and humbly presented the truth. "Res non verba" is the motto of their gigantic work. Humility has been the reason of their strength in adversity, and of their triumph over the attacks of those who have eyes and see not.

This was my thought while I listened to the stirring singing of the "Te Deum," on July 11, 1933, at Solesmes. Not only was it the reverberation of Dom Guéranger's favorite psalm (that his soul and all within him blessed the Lord), but it echoed the Canticle of her who gave to a troubled world the Saviour. "He that is mighty has done great things to me, and holy is His Name." Humility is the secret of enduring achievement because it has God's vision as security. This is the rock upon which Solesmes was restored by Dom Guéranger. In that spirit it has continued to spread its beneficent influence, making the Abbey of St. Peter a citadel of the glory of God.

## CATHOLIC LIBRARY BOOKS

By JAMES J. WALSH

JUST as schools were closing, THE COMMONWEAL published a series of letters with regard to the presence and absence of Catholic books in the New York Public Library. As we begin the new scholastic year, it may be of service for the thousands of Catholic students who are attending institutions in and around New York to have their attention called to the wealth of Catholic reading matter of all kinds that is to be found in the Public Library. These books are not all in any one branch, but all of them can be secured at any branch with a delay of but a day or two, by putting a card in for them. With the exception of a few reference books that are retained on the shelf for consultation, all the books listed may be secured for home reading or study. I have for years made use of the facilities of the Public Library in this regard with constant satisfaction, but when the letters in THE COMMONWEAL tempted me to look up the subject more especially, I was surprised to find how many Catholic books were available to readers.

We owe this collection so handy for readers to Right Reverend Monsignor Lavelle who soon after his appointment as rector inaugurated a free circulating library. He brought about the merger of a series of libraries belonging to various societies in the parish, aroused general interest and in the course of five years brought together some

15,000 books. A specialty was made of English Catholic literature and ecclesiastical history. An excellent collection along these lines was made. It constituted a very practical attempt not to direct readers as to what they should not read—always a dangerous procedure likely to defeat itself—but to provide them with what they ought to read and above all the books that every educated Catholic ought to be familiar with.

A special feature was made of juvenile books, in order to cultivate in children a taste for what was best in reading. In the course of time the Cathedral Library developed several branches and all of these, besides having an excellent collection of literature in English, made a special feature of the Catholic classics. They gathered the works of Catholic writers serious and fictional, yet they did not neglect any of the best books in English.

The cathedral libraries were taken over by the Public Library system of the State of New York after twelve years. The Catholic taste of the founders and attendants who did their work without pay had brought together a collection of books which continued to be a precious treasure and created a tradition in the choice of Catholic books which has been maintained ever since.

The church history department is particularly rich in authoritative works. Alzog and Birk-

haeuser for general history, Pastor's "History of the Popes," Kurth's "The Church at the Turning Points of History," are examples. Then there is Creighton's "History of the Papacy" for readers who may wish to hear the other side of the story. As a complement to these there is Montalembert's "Monks of the West," and sketches of the various modern religious orders by distinguished members. Of American church history there are Gilmary Shea's history, and Dr. Guilday's works, as well as Conway's "Studies in Church History," McCaffery's "History of the Catholic Church in the Nineteenth Century" and Father John Talbot Smith's "History of the Catholic Church in New York."

Several score of contributions to church history from recent writers are on the shelves including Christopher Dawson's striking contributions to the subject, nearly a dozen of Chesterton's, more than half a dozen of Belloc's, and Bede Jarrett's and Shane Leslie's and Hollis's books, with Shahan's "Middle Ages" and Newman's "Historical Sketches," and so on through a list much longer than anyone would think who had not drawn upon the collection for historical references when needed.

For serious readers there are a number of volumes with regard to Scholasticism and allied subjects. To begin with, that valuable work, Cardinal Mercier's "Manual of Scholastic Philosophy," then Kennedy's "Saint Thomas Aquinas and Medieval Philosophy," Gilson's "Philosophy of Saint Thomas Aquinas," our own Father Sheen's "God and Intelligence," and Father Cronin's "The Science of Ethics." Belgian, French, American, English, Irish, writers are all represented. There are, besides, all of Cardinal Newman's books as well as those of Cardinal Manning, and for Catholic mysticism there is not only Father Faber but many volumes from the older mystics including that old friend, Rodriguez on "Christian Perfection," Suarez on "The Religious State," Tauler's "Meditations" and Thomas à Kempis. Then among the moderns are Baron von Hugel and Maturin and Karl Adam and scores of others.

The Library is particularly rich in the life stories of men of high intelligence in our generation who became converts to the Church. The autobiography of Jørgensen, the Danish littérateur caught by the charm of Saint Francis, who himself now lives at Assisi, very properly heads the list. There is also Dr. Kinsman, the Anglican bishop of Delaware who paid his homage to Mother Church in "Salve Mater." Shortly before him, Von Ruville, whose book, "Back to Holy Church," caused such a commotion in Europe twenty years ago, is listed. He had been professor of history at Halle Wittenberg, Luther's university, and confessed that during that time he had never read a Catholic book. He thought he knew all about them,

but the very first Catholic book he ever read converted him to the Church.

The Americans whose autobiographies are in this special list are interesting. Stoddard, the popular lecturer, told in his "Rebuilding a Lost Faith" how he worked his way from infidelity back to the Church, and a dozen years later in a complementary volume told how satisfied he was with his life in the Church. Then there is our own New Yorker, Father Selden Delany, as well as John Moody, the famous founder of the Investors Service, who had been calculating security values for many years and told the story in "The Long Road Home" of the value that he came to put on the Catholic Church.

Some years ago Professor Stanley Hall of Clark University, Worcester, declared that an extremely important element in the reading of young folks ought to be such biographies as would awaken in them a sense of emulation of what was best in life. He declared that the Catholic Church in making a special cult of the lives of the saints had shown marvelously, as in so many other ways, how deep and practical was the knowledge of psychology among the ecclesiastics. He regretted that there were not more lives of admirable people outside the Church whose example would stimulate young readers and bring out the best that was in them. It may be recalled that many years ago Auguste Comte, the positivist, made a similar declaration and tried to supply such lives for youthful readers.

The New York Public Library has hundreds of lives of the saints in various branch libraries. They are of all nations and all countries and represent the successful effort of all sorts of people, from Augustine of Hippo to Thérèse of Lisieux, to strip themselves of selfishness and devote themselves to the care of others. There are great writers among them like Francis de Sales and the great Teresa of Spain and Saint Catherine of Siena, and others only less well known.

When I had the librarians provide a list of Catholic novels in the Library, I found all the old ones but also the more recent. Newman's "Callista" and "Loss and Gain," Wiseman's "Fabiola," Manzoni's "The Betrothed," Marion Crawford's novels and those of his sister were there and also the moderns, Marshall's "Father Malachy's Miracle," Theodore Maynard's "Divine Adventure," half a dozen of Rosa Mulholland's books and three of Mrs. Wilfrid Ward's, Owen Dudley's precious four and so on.

From this brief survey it will be seen that anyone who wants to find the best Catholic reading can secure it in abundant variety in the New York Public Library. They have serious books and trivial, and surely something to suit every taste. A trial will give one an appreciation of their number and variety.



# RUSSIAN VIGNETTES

By CLARA MERRILL

**S**VERDLOVSK . . . I sit at my hotel window in a drab old Russian city sprawling on the very edge of Siberia. It is a sunny, blowy morning in May, and this is my first week in the U.S. S.R. Below in the squalid, straggling square throng Mongol and Tatar and

Slav on their mysterious, never-ending quests. I look through swirls of dust across the street at a small dun-colored church. It stands bereft and forlorn within its wrought-iron enclosure. It bows beneath the blows of Soviet workmen who are at the moment engaged in destroying the squat, squarish steeple, symbol of its former estate. Cross and bells have vanished long ago. I watch the process sadly, for it is the church of my faith and of my fathers. It is—or was, until hands of desecration were laid upon it—the little Roman Catholic church of this jaded old city of unhappy memories. In the months to come I shall watch it being stripped bare of all signs of spiritual life and holy functions. I shall watch it become the clubroom of the young Comsomols, those strange new youths of this strange new Russia. And I shall remember that once its tabernacle enshrined Christ Our Lord in the Eucharist.

I shall remember, too, that my husband heard there perhaps the last Mass celebrated in that humble house of God. On his first Sunday in Russia, he knelt at Divine services there. Later, after a month's absence, he entered the church again on a Sunday at the hour of Mass, only to be immediately and firmly escorted out by two grim OGPU officers in uniform. The altars and sacred belongings were already being dismantled and removed. I shall always wonder what became of the kindly faced old priest whose consecrated charge it was. And I shall wonder what became of the worn-looking Russian who one day brought, and left with me to translate and sign, a petition requesting the reopening of the church to its congregation. He has never returned. The petition remains with me unclaimed, and the church remains closed to religious services.

Several great Russian churches are being demolished. In the night I am wakened by the dull reverberations of the bombing that disintegrates into ruin these places of worship. Specious reasons are consistently being given out by the authorities. I read in the English weekly printed by the Russians in Moscow that one old church must be

*Whether or not Russian Communism is soon to be at least governmentally recognized by the United States, which is confidently predicted by many adherents of political recognition, it is certain that the warfare upon religion not only continues in Russia, but is being stressed and pushed forward by an increasing pressure of a net-work of repressive legislation. We shall publish, probably in our next number, a strongly argued case against the recognition of Russia, written by Professor Leonid Strakhovsky.—The Editors.*

torn down at once because on its present site it constitutes a dangerous obstruction to traffic. I walk there to look. I see a beautiful large church facing picturesquely down a long, wide avenue. I see that it occupies merely a conspicuous central place in the largest

square in the city, with broad streets running out from it in every direction. Nevertheless, the great edifice with its lovely Byzantine domes and towers, hallowed through many years by the faith and devotion of pious Russian believers, goes slowly down to destruction. For a whole year the debris lies there unremoved. I note that it takes up exactly the same space that the church did of yore. Then suddenly, in the spring, shortly before the May-day holidays so beloved of the Soviet, there is much feverish activity in the square. Carts and laborers come and go, day after day, until at length the last vestige of the church is gone. Thereupon, on that site, filling almost precisely the same area occupied by the church is erected an ugly red and grey frame structure. It is a reviewing stand for Communist and army and OGPU officials, where they may in state watch the proletariat march meekly by in great involuntary holiday parades. So now Sverdlovsk, old Ekaterinburg, triumphantly boasts a Red Square. There is no longer a church to obstruct traffic or to give spiritual refuge to some yearning or heavy-laden Russian.

One day I go to collect some films which I have left at a little photograph studio to be developed and printed. Among them are three or four pictures of one of the churches in the process of demolition. A little packet is handed to me. I look through and discover that the prints of the church are missing. I question my loss. The clerk leans near to me and whispers softly so that none in the shop will hear, "I am very sorry, Madame. The others were confiscated . . . the police, you understand . . . they are 'political' and it is not permitted to have them."

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*Nizhni Tagill* . . . I saunter idly along the grass-grown borders of a dusty main street in a provincial town in the Ural Mountains. It is set at the foot of a peaceful shimmering lake with pleasant, wooded shores. Rows of log houses huddle behind high stockades of weather-beaten boardings, characteristic of all the villages



throughout the Urals. The little settlement extends haphazardly in every direction. Three churches on three hilltops rise in beauty above the town. Towering over all is the Visokia, or High Mountain, with its yawning pit made by two hundred years of mining—mining continuous since the first Dmidov in 1704 began the iron industry of the Urals at the behest of Peter the Great. At the foot of Visokia I see the old blast furnace and, not far away, the original slave-barracks, half-underground, with their iron-barred windows level with the street. I go into the deserted Dmidov palace and there I linger to study the portraits of the builders of this community—the ancestors of this princely family, handsome aristocrats, every one. Suddenly I remember the little Piazza Dmidov beside the green Arno in Florence and I long to know what link can exist between this dark Siberian village and the fairest of Italian cities.

I continue on my way. At the end of a broad street, once obviously hopeful and thriving but now dilapidated and desolate, I come upon a beautiful twin-spired church. A little knot of Russians is gathered nearby, some in tears and some crossing themselves in prayer. I join them to watch the futile efforts of two Communist workmen to tear down the gilded crosses on the slender steeples. They struggle long and stubbornly with ropes and winch, but the old builders have builded well. After a day's sweating toil, one of the graceful spires is wrenched over at a weird angle. Yet its cross still clings in its place. For weeks to come the other cross hangs downward, while above it the hammer and sickle of the Soviet flings its red folds to the breeze. Before I leave, I go inside the church. It is bare and abandoned, except for the usual clutter and clap-trap of the anti-religious museum of the Bolshevik.

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Moscow . . . The Kremlin Square is a splendid sunlit space, windswept and empty on a golden October afternoon. I come through the gate where not so long ago stood the venerable shrine of the Iberian Virgin. The Kremlin on my right is a superb spectacle. Its beauty is almost breathtaking in the glittering clarity of the autumn sunshine. It piles up its lovely domes and spires and battlemented walls in a gloriously effective mass above the banks of the Moskva River. I pass the great dark-red mausoleum of Lenin. Ahead, squat and low and brooding, at the end of the square, is that extraordinary bit of architecture, the ancient Church of St. Basil. Purely Oriental in design and execution, its eleven marvelous domes of varied shapes and vivid hues are singularly impressive against the cloudless sky and the old city. I pay a fee to enter. What was once a place of worship is now a museum, for scoffer and believer alike. I walk softly through its many dark, fres-

coed chapels, silent and empty. Crucifixes, candlesticks, bits of broken mosaic, small debris—all lie where they fell in the first days of pillage and senseless destruction. I stand amid the grime and dust and try to disregard them and to visualize a Greek service here . . . the candle-light flickering on murals like Italian primitives, the priests in golden vestments, the solemn chanting in minor key, the contemplative crowds, the muted hush of prayer . . . the vision fails in the lonely stillness.

So from the cool, dim shadows of the forsaken temple I come out again into the sunny warmth of the square. I hail a droshky and drive down to the river and around the Kremlin walls. I look across the distance and see the once renowned, beautiful Church of the Redeemer. Its shining golden dome is down and the rest is being swiftly leveled to earth—to make way for the new State Palace of the new Soviet Union. When I dismiss my *izvostchik*, I find myself once more near the gleaming marble tomb of Lenin. I view this modernistic monument. Surely there is irony in its setting against the background of crenellated walls and fanciful turrets and towers of the age-old imperial citadel, the Kremlin.

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Leningrad . . . It is charming, old St. Petersburg. After a year and a half of deprivation, I go to Mass in the Roman Catholic church on the Nevsky Prospekt, where lies buried in state the last King of Poland. This church is permitted to remain open, I am credibly informed, as a concession to foreign diplomats and embassy attachés from those other nations who still strangely believe there is a God. The church is thronged to the doors. I find no seat, and stand, a little above the crowds, on the step of a side altar. It is a devout, earnestly fervent congregation. It is composed for the most part of Russians, tired-eyed, and seeming abject and hopeless in their poor, nondescript garments. The Mass proceeds solemnly. The priest speaks briefly, gravely, to his flock. Time and time again the Communion railing fills with those who come eagerly, humbly, to receive the Bread of Life. I pray and pray again: "They are poor and needy: make haste unto them, O God: Thou art their help and their deliverer; O Lord, make no tarrying."

Later, I walk down the Nevsky Prospekt through a whirling snowstorm. The soft white flakes are heavy and cling where they fall, veiling the dinginess and decay of a dozen years of neglect. So this one-time notable, magnificent thoroughfare recaptures for an hour a magical, spacious loveliness. I walk toward the lemon-colored Admiralty Building and pass through the coffered archway of the old Military Offices into the vast cobbled square of Alexander I. The noble Alexandrovsky Column still dominates the square; but

the cross which formerly surmounted it is no more. I gaze across at the endless, ornate façade of the Winter Palace. Beyond flow the wide waters of the Neva. On the opposite shore I can glimpse through the swirling snowflakes the old burial-church of the czars within the Fortress of Peter and Paul. How exquisitely lovely its flèche, so tall, so delicately, incredibly slender, like a golden needle piercing the sky!

I wander on through historic streets and byways until I come out into the great space before St. Isaac's Cathedral. Its huge dome and four lesser domes loom out of the whiteness of the storm, dark and impressive, as I mount the steps to the entrance of the cathedral—a majestic colonnaded portico, like the temple of the Parthenon. Here I pay no fee. I enter at once into an atmosphere curiously Oriental. It is bizarre and certainly of another time and spirit and civilization than my own, but it was satisfying to the religious needs of the Russian people. It is oddly beautiful in a mysterious Byzantine fashion with great columns of polished malachite and lapis lazuli and rich incrustations of brilliantly colored mosaics and gleaming golden doors opening into the old Holy of Holies. But it is heartbreaking to me to discover this shrine now converted into an anti-religious museum. Most of its glowing mosaics are concealed beneath gigantic cardboards and banners flaunting blasphemies of the Christian faith. Lay figures are set up to mock what men have everywhere deeply revered.

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*New York City* . . . I have just come home again to my own land, where liberty of conscience and freedom of faith still obtain. I read my morning paper and this item comes to my eyes:

Leningrad, Jan. 19 (AP).—The Soviet government announced tonight that the Kazan Cathedral here would be converted into the largest anti-religious museum in the Soviet Union. The cathedral will be turned over to the Soviet Academy of Science for a museum along scientific lines, the announcement said [*New York Times*].

I close my eyes and I remember the sad faces of that little handful of Russians, old and young, who still dared to appear publicly at a church service and whom I saw in this very Kazansky Cathedral assisting at the old Orthodox Greek ceremony on my last morning in Russia. I wonder what they now think and how long they will endure. I remember the devout little procession which I myself joined as it wound its way through the outer sanctuary and mounted the steps to the old miraculous icon of the Kazansky Virgin. I ponder on the new edict reported in preparation in Moscow: "A campaign shall be conducted to the end that from May 1, 1937, there shall not remain a single house of prayer in Soviet territory."

## THE EIGHTH GIFT

By MARY H. DWYER

POETRY and life are simultaneous discoveries. At eighteen, let us say, existence flames suddenly into the consciousness of life. Childhood and adolescence, however sensitive and introspective, seem to the newly awakened adult mere phases of semi-blindness. "But this is the world," he says on an April morning. "This is spring and this is life. This is what they were talking about." Instantly the mystic "they" admit him as citizen to a world from which all the mists of familiarity have lifted—a strange world of sharp outlines and unbearable clarity. Then must he meet the first assault of Beauty, and if he be of the elect she deals him the immortal wound. (The unworthy, she deigns only to prick—a kind of inoculation making them forever immune to loveliness.)

This is the apocalypse of poetry. The child, the youth, may have read poetry with interest and enjoyment, even a certain appreciation, but not until life itself attains that first crystal lucidity does the mind savor the essence of poetry. How often one finds very keen imaginative children thrown into ecstasies of laughter by exceptionally lofty verse or a vivid metaphor! The explanation of this lies in something deeper than the obvious recognition that whatever is outside the child's range of experience must be ludicrous to him. This laughter proves, I think, that the first draughts of undiluted poetry are exhilarating to the point of intoxication—proof, in its very quality of tipsiness, that the mind is not yet ready for so strong and essential a potion.

Christopher Morley in "The Autogenesis of a Poet" tells of just such salutary laughter which convulsed a young Haverfordian while he was first reading Keats. The essay has always been a favorite with me because I too grew hilarious in my first contacts with sublimities. Much younger than the risible freshman I was, not more than eight or nine it seems, when I first carried a prayer-book to Vespers. Even then, an enthusiastic if embryonic liturgist, I was determined to follow the services by reading the Psalms. My introduction to David was: "The Lord said unto my lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemy thy footstool." Never had I read anything so deliciously funny. That most exquisite of agonizing pleasures, laughter in church, consumed me. But when "the mountains skipped like rams: and the little hills like lambs of the flock," then must I put away the book to escape black disgrace, but with the prospect of reading more at home, where laughter is no sin. I recall, too, that though disinterested adults refused to wax enthusiastic over these sacred examples of levity, they tolerated my laughter without rebuke. And Psalms read for pleasure, however perverse, must insinuate their cadences and beauty into the most immature mind: "My cup which inebriateth me, how goodly it is." Goodly, indeed, and as true of the grace, Poetry, as of Piety or Fear of the Lord.

When the mind and spirit are ready for it, poetry is no longer intoxicant, but stimulant. In those early days of Epicurean delight, when every loveliness must be deli-



cately tasted and savored, poetry becomes the standard by which all pleasures are judged. No adventure is truly beautiful that lacks the alien quality, the newness life assumed in the first moment of revelation. Poetry preserves this quality pure and untainted. And if the accidents of existence are too commonplace, too ugly to measure up to poetry, then poetry becomes the herald of life, the harbinger of those rarities that youth, at its most pessimistic, never doubts it will experience soon. This is the time when the poetry of locale has its dominion—far places, the sea; when romance means that any stranger may wear the face of the beloved. A lonely surgeon's apprentice walks in Vauxhall, hungry for beauty and love, catches a fleeting glimpse of a charming girl, and five years later writes:

"Time's sea hath been five years at its slow ebb,  
Long hours have to and fro let creep the sand  
Since I was tangled in thy beauty's web  
And snared by the ungloving of thy hand."

No hint here of what life was soon to offer him, no premonition of Fanny Brawne and pain. Only "delight and sweet remembering"—not properly "life" at all. (Here is the most delicate "might-have-been" in literature—who and what was she that, without a word, captured Keats's fancy, and five years later emerges with that single exquisite gesture? Who is not snared by the ungloving of that hand?)

It is in this office of anticipation and dream that poetry first seems to threaten life with violence. Life is so likely to lag behind, to grow niggardly. The dreamer who has come to expect much of it stands aghast at the hardness of reality. "The open road," the poet has sung, and he finds it lined with signboards. "The wine-dark sea"—he sees it framed with wooden boxes, cluttered with swimmers. The far places are far indeed, and utterly beyond him. Love is a bitter business of surfeit or frustration not comparable with Iseult's glory. "Since this is life," he says, "this poverty, this ugliness, this pain, let us turn our backs upon it. Let us take the dream." And the dream conquers life, but the dream is not poetry.

Poetry wrestles with life, struggles against its externals, interprets it, but never withdraws from it. Every nobility we achieve is an expression of poetry, every poem a gift of significance to life. Those who complain that life has no meaning are those who have lost their faith in poetry and God.

Nothing in life is so lamentable but poetry can dignify it without falsification. Think of that insoluble problem of philosophers, physical pain—think of the diseases that engender it, for example, a peculiarly loathsome disease, cancer. Think of two middle-aged spinsters, an aunt and her niece (words unromantic in their very context)—the aunt lying near death, her breast eaten away by cancer, the niece already afflicted with the same malady, though she alone knows it. Isn't this surely a picture of life at its shabbiest, its most meaningless? Ask those two who wrote under the name of Michael Field. Ask Edith Cooper as she lies there in her death agony, refusing the least comfort of morphia that she may suffer for Christ's sake. Ask Katherine Bradley, who may not alleviate that suffering or her own love. The answer is—a song.

"She is singing to thee, Domine.

Dost hear her now?

She is singing to thee from a burning throat,  
And melancholy as the owl's love-note.

She is singing to thee from the utmost bough  
Of the tree of Golgotha, where it is bare  
And the fruit torn from it that fruited there;  
She is singing. Cans't thou stop the strain,  
The homage of such pain?

Domine, stoop down to her again!"

Her youth and her beauty are gone, her life very nearly—  
yet the other watching cries:

"I look on that lovely head  
And its majesty doth win  
Grief in my heart as for sin.  
Oh, what can death have to do  
With a curve that is drawn so fine,  
With a curve that is drawn so true  
As the mountain's crescent line?  
Let me be hid where the dust falls fine."

What can death have to do with that lovely head? Nothing. Poetry assures it immortality.

Strange, then, it is to find the artist constantly tortured by the suspicion that poetry is hostile to life. There must be grief if there is to be poetry. The passionate desire for the thing we no longer possess, for the thing beyond what we possess, is its soul. Every delight that is sung becomes "Joy whose hand is ever at his lips"; every loveliness, "Beauty that must die." Stuart Sherman writes at twenty-six: "It has somehow been growing heavily on me that all poetry is an enemy of life. I'm in confusion about it—tormented with a desire for it; daily clearer that you can't have both." Eventually he does turn from poetry to prose. For once this clear-eyed observer of life and letters confused "life" with its externals. Poetry does not subtract from reality. It multiplies it into significance.

As for those who contend that they get along very well without poetry (even to the extent of saving their souls)—very probably they do. Only the martyrs, we are told, received the full gift of Fortitude. It may be that Poetry too is bestowed only on those who need it—this eighth gift of the Holy Ghost.

### *Conch Shell*

This conch shell in the garden path is surf,  
The wild gull mewing, scaling in the wind,  
The ribbon weed, the sedge, the silver-finned,  
The growling wave beneath green mats of turf.

Here with this rain-white, pointed shell I stand  
Against the sea. What memories endure  
When small wild running feet, sandpiper spoor,  
Are marking tiny runes on levelled sand!

Over the Inland mountain, lake and stream,  
Across the plain, upon a wind is borne  
The brine, the breath of seas; the surf a horn  
Blowing a silver note that haunts my dream.

JOHN LEE HIGGINS.



## THE STAGE AND SCREEN

By RICHARD DANA SKINNER

### *Dinner at Eight—Screen Style*

WHEN George Kaufman and Edna Ferber wrote "Dinner at Eight," they had enough innate artistry to leave their story at loose ends. They sought and attained irony by throwing together the ill-assorted group of people whose private lives they had etched, by leaving the one vacant chair which the burned-out movie actor was to have occupied, by leaving all others in ignorance of his death, and by having Paula Jordan flutter uneasily about the stage as the curtain fell, like a lost spirit with a premonition of tragedy. They knew, as we all know, that life has a habit of falling into just such curious patterns, most of them unfinished, few of them distinguished by clear-cut climax of design, and, knowing this, the authors had the daring to let their play fall after a living fashion. Hollywood, in its screen version of the famous play, has changed all this.

There is no irony left in Hollywood's "Dinner at Eight"—nothing but sweetness and light and a careful patching up even of the tragedy of Larry Renault's death. Mrs. Jordan, the fluttering hostess of the story, discovers her husband's serious heart condition in time to repent of all her light-headed folly. Dan Packard, the crooked promoter who has been buying up Jordan's shipping company, is conveniently blackmailed by his gutter-snipe wife into saving Jordan's company instead of freezing out its owner. Carlotta Vance, the buoyantly ancient actress, learns of Renault's suicide, and breaks the news of it so gently to Paula Jordan that the girl is able to go dry-eyed to dinner on the arm of her fiancé, to whom Carlotta has advised her to say nothing of her "past" with the actor. It is surprising, in view of all these dramatic poulitices, that Lord and Lady Ferncliffe, for whom the dinner is being given, and whose rude departure for Florida upsets Mrs. Jordan's plans, do not change their minds and attend the happy dinner party. Their failure to do so must have been due to an oversight in the Metro Goldwyn Mayer studio.

Prior to this clumsy attempt to patch things up for the benefit of the mothers' whist club, the play fares well in the hands of an expert and decidedly stellar cast. Marie Dressler is, of course, superbly the mistress of her part as Carlotta Vance, and Billie Burke comes admirably to the rescue of what was the weakest link in the stage production, the part of Mrs. Jordan. Wallace Beery and Jean Harlow have it out in most amazing style as Dan Packard and his tough-kitten wife. They are worth a play by themselves. Madge Evans plays Paula Jordan, and John and Lionel Barrymore play Renault and Mr. Jordan respectively. The story still suffers somewhat from overemphasis on the drunken inanities of Renault. Nor does John Barrymore hide his light sufficiently to be a "burned-out" star. Lionel Barrymore, whom I have always considered the finer artist of the two brothers, is excellent throughout. Film fans may be somewhat startled to find comparatively minor parts taken by such stellar magnitudes as Lee Tracy, Edmund Lowe and

Karen Morley, not to mention Grant Mitchell, Phoebe Foster and Anna Duncan. In spite of this, George Cukor, the director, has managed to blend these varied talents into an excellent and well-modulated ensemble.

But no amount of good acting and directing can make up for the loss of dramatic value in the altered ending. Theoretically, the play of "Dinner at Eight" was no play at all. It raised problems only to drop them. It was more the prologue to a play than a play in itself in the strictly dramatic sense. It was a series of episodes culminating in an ironic situation tinged with tragedy—a situation that would have required a whole play as a sequel to untangle the threads and straighten out the lives of those eight people. Hollywood has tried to settle it all with the simplicity of a nursery rhyme. The result is incredible. (At the Astor Theatre.)

### *Murder at the Vanities*

EARL CARROLL appends a note to his program which says that "Murder at the Vanities" is not the usual 'Vanities' revue presentation. It is, rather, a play whose locale happens to be backstage during a performance of 'The Vanities,' 11th edition." As a matter of fact, the audience is transported back and forth between backstage and the front of the house in rather bewildering fashion, glimpsing alternately corpses and strange figures moving in green spotlights and then scenes from a possible "Vanities," 11th edition. It is neither mystery play nor musical revue.

One is a little puzzled to know just why professor Carroll should have selected this combination of unmixable elements. It certainly does not mark an abandonment of his special talent for selecting the vulgar. The comedy supplied by Billy House is of that special variety which produces feelings associated with rough weather at sea. Other well-known Carroll elements are on a general parity with Billy House. Nor is the mystery play part of the evening much to boast of. To cap the climax, the music is dull and the general pace of the entertainment sluggish. (At New Amsterdam Theatre.)

### *Headline Shooters*

THE ETHICS of the newest branch of journalism—the work of the camera man—come in for some rough handling in a film which Hollywood has thrown together from a series of sensational movietone shots of fires, floods, gang murders and the like. The story, such as it is, concerns the inability of one trained in the reporting school, whether for print or picture, ever to leave the exciting atmosphere of news.

As a combination of story and news reel features, "Headline Shooters" moves rather slowly, but it does have decidedly effective spots. Frances Dee as a "sob sister" carries that conviction of pleasant reality which is her special property as a screen actress. The inimitable Robert Benchley contributes a few hilarious moments as a radio announcer for a bathing beauty contest, repairing a broken microphone and yawning profusely while he is giving the eager world a snappy account of the silliest of American performances.

## COMMUNICATIONS

## A FRANCISCAN INSTITUTE

Sudbury, Mass.

TO the Editor: The Franciscan Institute, recently held at South Byfield, Massachusetts, recalls a favorite haunt of Saint Francis not often visited by his lovers outside of Italy. We all follow him from Assisi to La Verna but few break the journey at Sansepolcro and climb the road that spirals up into the mountains above the valley of the Tiber, where the tiny sanctuary of Montecasale clings precariously to the hillside. It seems the most solitary of all the mountain fastnesses beloved by the saint, although the peaks which surround it, the lovely valley from which they rise, have fascinated Italian writers from Pliny to Carducci. Thither Saint Francis must often have climbed on the long journeys to La Verna. Here also came Saint Anthony to meditate on his "Sermonario per tutti i tempi dell' anno." And here Saint Bonaventure wrote his "Life of Saint Francis."

We may still climb the steps and enter the portal where Saint Francis greeted the three thieves who had infested these mountains and by his gentle words turned them from their evil ways until they became his zealous disciples. In proof of which there are the skulls of two of them, in cupboards hollowed in the walls of the saint's own oratory. Today there are only four brothers in the monastery, although students sometimes come to study in the library and to find, with Saint Jerome, paradise in solitude.

We had paused at Sansepolcro to look again at the marvelous fresco of the Resurrection by Piero della Francesca, hoping this time the light would be good. It was a perfect April day in Holy Week and the mountains drew us irresistibly away from the dark town. So we interrupted our pilgrimage to Assisi and turned the car up the steep and narrow road which winds high up among these mountains to Montecasale.

The monastery itself is hardly to be detected from a distance, so much does it seem a part of the rock to which it clings. Below it a terrace has been cut in the hillside where artichokes and beans were growing and where rosemary was in blossom. The door of the tiny chapel was open and a monk, in his brown habit, was arranging flowers on the altar for Holy Saturday. So small it was that the three of us seemed a crowd.

It takes but a few minutes to see the chapel and the oratory, the cells of the saints and the relics. Outside a path wanders away through a grove of great chestnut trees along the mountainside. The descending sun was patterning the path with gold and the mossy banks that bordered it were fragrant with violets and hepaticas of a lovely, intense blue. Under the trees everywhere pale yellow primroses were opening for Easter. On one side the hill dropped steeply and across the ravine, on the opposite hillside, the sheep were wandering down, one by one, presently followed by a pretty shepherdess, a kerchief on her head and a staff in her hand. Now and then she called to them in a kind of chant, and sometimes,

far off, a lamb bleated for its mother, reminding us once more that it was Easter.

When we returned to Montecasale we met another monk, with a long white beard, his bare feet in sandals and his arms full of oak logs, which must have been needed after sundown. We wished that we might linger here instead of returning to Sansepolcro, but alas we were women, so we received the blessings of the kind, brown-faced Brothers, left the peaks turning amethyst, and descended into the shadows of the valley, thankful for

"Soro nostro madre terra  
Con coloriti fiori et erba."

MARGARET A. WHITING.

## INDICTMENT

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor: Once again THE COMMONWEAL has read my mind and this time answered with "Indictment," by Stuart D. Goulding. Take that with the letter, "Catholic Subscriber Power," by George P. Prendergast, S.J., in the September 2 issue of *America*, and we have a small arrow pointing to a great fault.

This fault is the apathy and lethargy of Catholics in getting their viewpoint before the non-Catholic in the street. For this particular purpose, the newspaper has great advantages over the radio. The printed word is nearly permanent, and the newspaper is read by men who never go near a library or bookstore. The men in Columbus Circle, in the shops, stores and work places are not all as bigoted, nor as prejudiced against the Catholic faith, as their fathers were. They want the truth, but often shy away from Catholicism because they hear so little of it. I believe that the Catholic workman knows this point better than the missionary. Most Catholic literature is read by Catholics only.

The course of action proposed by Father Prendergast is certainly worthy of our consideration. Father Coughlin is quoted as saying that Roosevelt has more courage than 90 percent of our Catholic priests. Why should the truth hide under innate modesty or fear of criticism? Christ spoke out.

JOHN A. CURRAN.

Lewiston, Ida.

TO the Editor: "Indictment" by Stuart D. Goulding, in your issue of September 1, is direct, and is true. Why is it that we are unable to furnish the press with details of our activities? Perhaps the Catholic Church and the Catholic faith will always be mysteries to those outside the fold, but surely we should not neglect to give to the world those commonplaces which every other denomination is eager to furnish. No doubt some of this neglect is properly laid at the feet of our clergy, who do not realize the worldly viewpoint of others; but part of it is the fault of the laity. What can you and I do to remedy the situation?

C. A. HAWKINS.

## BOOKS

## Mental Explorations

*Adventures of Ideas, by Alfred North Whitehead.*  
New York: The Macmillan Company. \$3.50.

THE PRESENT volume is the third and final in a series in which Professor Whitehead has "endeavored to express a way of understanding the nature of things." "Process and Reality" and "Science and the Modern World" were the earlier ones. In "Science and the Modern World" he attempted a synthesis of "modern" science compatible with his conception of life and the universe as worked out in "Process and Reality," and based on the principle that "things" in nature are constantly "changing" and that life is constantly "becoming"—a conception variously elaborated by Bergson, Hegel, Vico, Plato, Heraclitus and others in the long line of Western thinkers.

In "Adventures of Ideas" he endeavors to illustrate the workings of that conception by "the effect of certain ideas in promoting the slow drift of mankind toward civilization." Chief among those ideas he stresses Plato's concept of the human soul and his notions of intellectual and moral freedom—the fusion of which largely explains the world today. And he concludes that, since life means "change" (or movement), the aim of society should be to strive after "new perfections" and "peace"—a state of being which in Platonic philosophy and in Catholic theology means, ultimately, to live in harmony with oneself, with one's fellow beings and with God.

In spite of his special terminology and peculiarly devious method of presenting his subject, which often mystify the reader rather than clarify his thesis, it is in tracing the Platonic ideal of the human soul, the momentum that ideal gained through primitive Christianity, and the powerful spiritual force it became in the hands of the Church in molding Western civilization, that Dr. Whitehead contributes the finest pages of his book. His emphasis on the grandeur of the human soul is both morally and spiritually uplifting, and deserving of our gratitude for the fine Platonic and Christian stimulation it affords. Here, indeed, notwithstanding his veiled scorn for the literary mind, he writes more as a poet and a humanist than a metaphysician.

But, unfortunately, that much cannot be said for the treatment he accords the evolution of moral and political freedom. In this phase of his book, Dr. Whitehead sorely neglects to show the unmistakable, concrete influence that Lord Bryce credited to the early Italian republics, city-states, and to the Renaissance itself in forwarding the democratic ideal, and greatly overestimates the theoretical contributions of later political theorists—Bacon, Hume, Locke, Bentham, Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, etc. As fact or actuality invariably precedes theory, that seems like putting the cart before the horse.

While there is no denying Dr. Whitehead's stimulating ideas and brilliant prose, yet his penchant for literary

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effect rather than logical sequence in presenting his material too often results in confusion. There is a wealth of ideas in the book, but they are poorly correlated. He tries to compress too many fields of knowledge within the pages of "Adventures of Ideas"—philosophy, science, religion, metaphysics, politics, art, beauty and what not—while, at the same time, affording no more than cursory treatment of the many questions and problems implicit in his discussion. These shortcomings naturally detract from the total significance of this important and elevating book.

DINO FERRARI.

**Japanese Epic**

*The Lady of the Boat*, by Murasaki Shikibu; translated by Arthur Waley. Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company. \$3.50.

TOWARD the close of the eighth century the Japanese court moved from Nara to Heian-Jo or the City of Peace, now known as Kyoto, and here lived for one thousand and seventy-four years. During this time the fight for court supremacy was waged internally between the branches of the Fujiwara family, who as a bloc opposed the attempts of the Taira and the Minamoto families to obtain political control.

The supremacy of the Fujiwara family in political control was, in their view, rendered more secure by the marriage of their most eligible daughters, as occasion offered, to a Mikado. This ensured the position of leading minister as their family perquisite. For numerous members of the family, by life, habits and upbringing fitted only for court life, offices and positions had to be found. Thus the court was filled with petty officials, both male and female.

In such an atmosphere Murasaki Shikibu lived. Of such a life she wrote descriptions, etched in with a minuteness that brings the scenes clearly before our eyes; her portraits of persons, and her accounts of events, are so vivid and detailed that the people and action of the story appear to the reader as on a motion picture screen.

Born in 978, she was the daughter of Fujiwara Tame-toko, a member of a junior branch of that great family. Her life's record is simple. At the age of nineteen she was married to Fujiwara Nobutaka, her daughter was born A.D. 1000, and in the year following a pestilence swept through Japan, during which her husband died. It seems that the next four years were spent in the country, but in 1005 she was recalled to the court at Kyoto to be a lady-in-waiting to Queen Akiko.

It was during these four years of absence that Japanese scholars and historians suggest that the "Genji Monogatari" or "Narrative of Genji" was written, though Mr. Waley places the date as 1008. These four volumes describe the life and adventures of a person called Prince Genji who is made to live at the same time as the authoress. This present volume, being the fifth part of the tale of Genji, deals with the vagaries of human life and the tricks which fate played on Genji.

It will be remembered that Genji fell in love with his

imperial father's concubine, Fu-ji-tsu-bo, by whom he had a son, Ryozen, who passed as the emperor's son. Fate then repeats this trick upon Genji himself, for Ka-shi-wa-gi, the son of Genji's bosom friend, has a child named Kaoru, by Nyosan, concubine of Genji. It is with this Kaoru, and Niou, Genji's grandson, who are at one time rivals for the love of Kozeri, that this final volume deals. Of the details of the story unfolded, little need here be said, as it must be read to appreciate the charm of the court life of mediaeval Japan.

Murasaki Shi-ki-bu produced for Japan a new kind of composition, an epic of life, not unlike the modern novel, in which she displayed not only her skill, but pleasure in delineating types of womanhood. She knew her subject matter, which she treats with the meticulous minuteness with which a miniature is produced, and from the picture no detail of manner, costume or behavior is absent. As a picture of a past state of society, there is little in Europe or America that can compare with this sympathetic and realistic work, which, in view of its antiquity, antedating Boccaccio, Dante and Chaucer, is as remarkable as it is fascinating.

It should be pointed out that this series of books does not include her diary, which Mr. Waley promises us. Mr. Waley's translation of "The Lady of the Boat" is made from Dr. Kaneko's new edition.

BOYD-CARPENTER.

### Poems as Pictures

*Frescoes for Mr. Rockefeller's City*, by Archibald MacLeish. New York: The John Day Company. \$.25.

FROM incidentals to "Conquistador"—an idea expressed in a line, an image—used as points of departure, have grown these six poems. They are strictly contemporary. Here (and in the single poem, "1933," read at Harvard in June and recently printed in the *Yale Review*), Mr. MacLeish's "program" is becoming apparent. It is not yet explicit. His political attitude, for instance, more closely resembles individualism than anything. And since his "Hamlet," which, seemingly, should have led him to a positive attitude toward either "accepted" religion or (less reasonably) to an individual and composite religious faith, Mr. MacLeish has ignored, in his poems, definite religious views. Since his "Hamlet," his writings have seemed, in a manner of speaking, excursions: one is still waiting for the poem that should follow it.

What is most obvious in these six poems is a certain nostalgia one fancies inescapable in America, that melancholy sense of something gone wrong. They, and the "1933" referred to, which greatly assists articulation of Mr. MacLeish's attitude, contain poetry, a slightly vulgar humor (since humor is more than likely to be vulgar when it is merely condescension); passages almost as fine as any of their author's, others in which he errs, his diction falters, he writes humbly but without authority, he is not so much as he *resembles*, and the resemblance is of Pound, Sandburg, Eliot.

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**Briefer Mention**

*Happy Holidays*, by Eleanor Graham. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. \$2.00.

THIS account of the source of an enormous number of general holidays and festivals, as well as of the traditional observances which mark them, will both instruct the young reader and charm him. The months are set down in orderly succession, with the solemnities and the high jinks immemorially belonging to each, and the author has artfully inserted a good many literary quotations along with the merry doggerels chanted or shouted by the celebrators. In addition to the well-known holidays—Christmas, Epiphany, St. Valentine's Day, Shrovetide, St. Patrick's Day, Whitsun and so on—much material is included on minor festivals and joke days which have fallen out of use. The adult reader will enjoy the account of the "Daft Days," St. Distaff's Day, Midsummer Eve, St. Luke's Day, Lord Mayor's Day. All in all, it is a well-written and an intelligent children's book.

*Proud Horns*, by Carleton Drury. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$1.50.

MR. DRURY might more appropriately have taken another phrase from his introductory poem and called his book "Bitter Song." Death and doom and all kinds of misery stalk their way through it, so that despite the manifold merits of the poems therein, the book as a whole becomes boring and even a little absurd. Yet there is strength and sincerity and intelligence in each poem, and the despairing emotions are perfectly matched with exquisite verbal music in a minor key. His despair apparently arises logically from a disbelief in God and a future life. Yet regardless of philosophical implications, witness the beauty of such lines as these:

" . . . the mind,  
Like a doomed figure at the window  
Of a house afire,  
Leans curiously from its tottering tower  
To watch the body die."

**CONTRIBUTORS**

REV. VINCENT C. DONOVAN, O.P., is an authority on liturgical arts.

JAMES J. WALSH, M.D., writer and lecturer, is the author of "The Thirteenth, the Greatest of Centuries" and other books.

CLARA MERRILL resided in Russia during two years while her husband was engaged there as consultant engineer.

MARY H. DWYER is a Connecticut poet and essayist.

JOHN LEE HIGGINS is a Boston poet.

DINO FERRARI is a writer of criticism for newspapers and reviews.

BOYD-CARPENTER, a writer on European politics, is attached to the faculty of the School of Foreign Service of Georgetown University.

RAYMOND LARSSON, poet and critic, is the author of "O City, Cities!"



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